The Catalyst

The Newsletter for Interpretation in California State Parks

Winter 1999 **Volume 4 No. 1**

In Memory of Jeff Brady

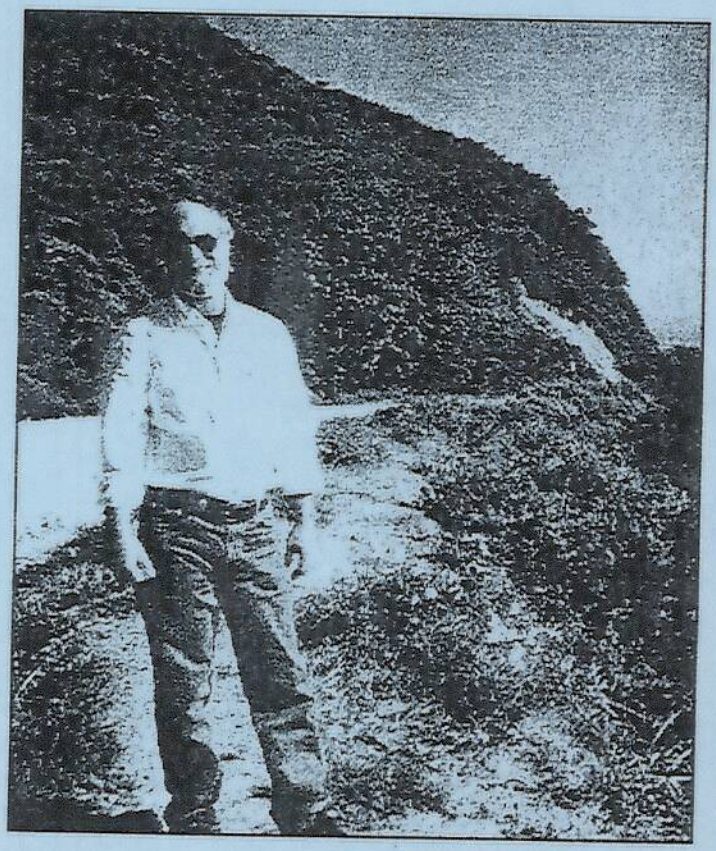
This issue of The Catalyst is dedicated to the memory of Jeff Brady, Business Services Officer of the Distribution and Reproduction Center (a.k.a. DARC).

Jeff passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday, December 22 at age 49. He is survived by his wife, Debra, and his son, Matthew. The December 30th memorial service for Jeff was well attended by family and friends. His many coworkers in attendance considered him both family and friend, a sentiment that was warmly expressed in testimonials.

At Headquarters, the sense of grief and loss is still healing and will take time, particularly for those on the tenth floor in the Administrative Services Division. Additionally, interpreters from the field and headquarters will miss Jeff. They knew him to be very supportive and helpful. He provided his expertise in printing and distributing *The Catalyst* and many other projects.

On a personal note, I met Jeff while I worked in the Publications Section. I depended on Jeff and his staff at DARC to pull together complex projects and meet tight deadlines. I realized right away that Jeff was protective and supportive of his staff. He showed a care and concern for his staff and his customers as human beings. But, no matter how busy he was, he always had time for a friendly conversation.

What I will remember about Jeff is the welcoming look in his eye, his unique way of enunciating words, his



humor and most of all knowing he was there to depend on at the end of my projects—to take them through that final big step to completion.

Having lost a vital force from the park family, we are reminded to live every day to the fullest and recognize the importance of how we touch the lives of others.

By Linda McDonald

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

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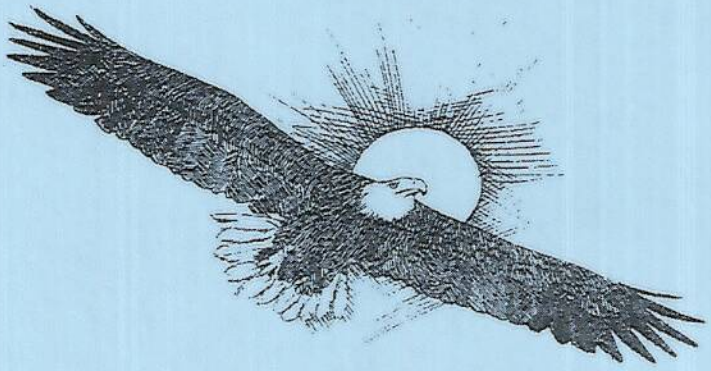
Contributor's Guidelines

Catalyst welcomes your original articles of any length! Or, send copies of stories published elsewhere that you think our readers will appreciate. Be sure to include information about the publication so we can get permission to use the material. You may submit an article at any time.

We **really** appreciate articles submitted on disk or by e-mail. We can read most formats of DOS/Windows disks. Printed manuscripts, facsimile or phone messages are also accepted. Please advise if you would like your diskette returned, otherwise we will recycle it in our office to save postage.

Illustrations are strongly encouraged. Drawings, graphs or other illustrations may be submitted on disk or hard copy. Black & white glossy photos are preferred; color prints or slides are usually acceptable. All photos and artwork submitted will be returned promptly.



"Dostoyevsky once wrote. 'Beauty will save the world.' But who will save beauty?"
– Yevgeny Yevtushenko

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From the Editor

Thank you for reading *Catalyst!* If your mailbox is like mine, there is a lot more in it than there is time to read. We respect that. We've sifted through thousands of pages of "stuff" to bring you these 22 pages. I hope you'll find some "good stuff" here.

We dedicate this issue to Jeff Brady. As head of the Department's Distribution and Reproduction Center, he was very helpful to Catalyst over the years. We will miss him.

Starting with this issue, the "What's Up — Interpreter's Resources" page comes with a companion web page. From this page, a single click will connect you with each of the features presented there. Check it out at www.statepark.org/caytalyst.html. More of *Catalyst* will be available online in the future. We'd like to hear what you think about this.

The way we do business is changing these days and we've found a couple of pieces that may help you better understand these changes. "The Times, They Are A-Changing" on page 6 is written by Dr. Tim Merriman, Executive Director of the National Association for Interpretation. It comes to us from *The Traveler*, NAI's Resource Interpretation & Heritage Tourism Newsletter. Tim can be reached at naiexec@aol.com.

Following on page 8, "Heart Healthy Choices" offers advice on meeting the demands of the market. It was written by Dave Brooks, manager of the Spring Valley Nature Sanctuary in Illinois, who can be reached at (847) 985-2100. This piece was featured in *Buffalo Bull*, the NAI Region 5 Newsletter.

Winter Bonnin sends us "Docent Day at Crystal Cove." Winter is a frequent contributor to *Catalyst* and a park interpretive specialist there. She can be reached at winter63@juno.com.

On page 10, "Women Outstanding in Their Field" takes a look at some outstanding women naturalists in the early days. It is written by Rainy Campbell of the Lloyd A. Stage Natural Heritage Park — Troy Nature Center in Michigan. An intriguing sidebar by Julie Champion accompanies the article. Julie works at the Metro Beach Nature Center, Michigan and can be contacted at (810) 463-4332. This piece comes to us from *FourThought*, the NAI Region 4 Newsletter.

On page 12 we present "Planting Interpretive Seeds." written by Carl Strang of the Willowbrook Wildlife, Center in Illinois. It is excerpted from a forthcoming book titled *Interpretive Undercurrents* which will be published by the National Association for Interpretation later this year. You may contact Carl at (630) 942-6206.

If you're any kind of a birdwatcher, you'll enjoy Brian Barnette's "On Being Listless" on page 14. Brian is Chief Naturalist at the Dallas Museum of Natural History where he can be reached at (214) 421-3466 x230. This story also appeared in *Visions*, the NAI Region 6 Newsletter.

On page 16 we offer a final wrap-up of State Parks Month '98. The story is by Linda McDonald who would love to hear from you at LMCDO@parks.ca.gov.

Mary Stokes, of Four Rivers District, sends us "Naming the Rose" on page 17. Mary can be reached at (209) 826-1196.

Pat Clark-Gray sends a report on the Green and Gold Conference. Pat is Monterey District DIS and can be reached at (408) 649-2855.

All this follows up with the latest installment of the "Parks 150 Page" and "California's Tapestry." I hope you find something here that you can use. By the way, Catalyst is currently seeking a Co-Editor. If you would like to be considered or have questions, please contact Donna Pozzi at DPOZZ@parks.ca.gov.

Brian W. Cahill

Brian Cahill, Editor

What's Up?

Interpreters' Resources

Oral History Workshop

Fifth Annual Morrissey Oral History Workshop to be held in San Francisco March 5, 6 & 7, 1999. For information: (415) 928-3417

Museums and the Web

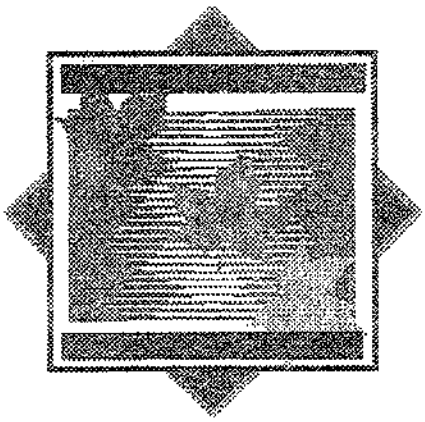
Explore the issues and opportunities facing museums on the web. March 11-14, 1999, New Orleans, Louisiana. For information see http://www.archimuse.com/mw99/

NAAEE Conference

28th Annual Conference of the North American Association for Environmental Education *"Linking EE & Education Reform,"* Cincinnati, Ohio - August 26-30, 1999. See: http://www.naaee.org/html/conf.htm or call (706) 764-2926

National Interpreter's Workshop

Don't miss it! The 1999 Workshop theme is "Changing Seasons, Changing Centuries." It will be held in Syracruse NY, October 14-19.



School-To-Park Resource

Scholastic Inc. has a relatively new reading/language arts series called Literacy Place for grades K-6. Each grade level has six books/units, each with a different language arts concept. Each book features a mentor who is introduced in a great video and featured throughout the text. Guess who the mentor is for one of the 4th grade books? A park ranger!!

Scholastic is a large and well known developer of educational materials. See if a school near your park is using this series and check out "Nature Guides." It will have great tie-ins with your park education programs. The number for ordering or requesting a catalog is 1-800-724-6527 or see: www.scholastic.com

Heritage Education

What is the best way to interest children in historic sites? How can teachers integrate heritage education into the school curriculum? What are preservation organizations around the country doing to teach children about built environments? The National Trust for Historic Preservation Information series offers three publications that answer all of your heritage education questions. For a complete catalog listing of heritage preservation titles, please call (202) 588-6296 or see: www.InfoSeries.com

National History Day

See: www.thehistorynet.com/NationalHistoryDay

EPA's Explorer's Club for Kids

Visit the virtual clubhouse and enjoy activities in the Art Room, the Game Room, the Science Room and the Trophy Case. Then, venture outdoors to learn about Plants & Animals, Water, Air, Garbage and Recycling, and Your Environment. You can ask Charlie Chipmunk questions and enjoy a variety of fun stories, coloring books and games. See: http://www.epa-gov/kids/

Recycle City

See how the people of Dumptown turned their backward town around. Find out how Recycle City reduces waste and saves money. Learn more about recycling than you ever dared! Site includes graphics, games, activities and facts. See: http://www.epa.gov/recyclecity/

The Green Brick Road

The Green Brick Road (GBR) Is a non-profit organization which specializes in resources and information for students and teachers of global and environmental education. The site includes a listing of EE resources, a calendar of events, and a chance to ask the On-Line Naturalist or the Eco-Wiz a question. See: http://gbr.org/home.htm

Visit us on the Web
Direct Links to these items can be found at:
www.statepark.org/caytalyst.html

Dear Master Interpreter

Dear Master Interpreter,
I've heard other interpreters mention that they "stole" this or that idea from another interpreter. I always feel a bit guilty or lacking creativity when I try to borrow the ideas of others. If I ever have a good idea I wouldn't want everyone else using it!

Guilty

Dear Guilty,
Have you ever played the game "telephone" where a message is passed through a group of people and it changes until it is practically indistinguishable by the end? I steal a good idea wherever I find it but I know that by the time I actually use it the interpreter I took it from might not even recognize it. I'm just not that person and I can't possibly duplicate the exact program or idea. The situation and surroundings are different for each program. Sometimes I hardly even recognize my own ideas when I use them!

A wise interpreter once said there is nothing new in interpretation — I think there is some truth to that! A good interpreter is always looking for fresh ideas. Don't worry about using someone else's idea to help you develop your own.

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,
I'm re-doing an old interpretive panel. We plan to re-use most of the old text and some of the graphics. Do you know any tricks to help me make the panel more effective?

Panel Maker

Dear Panel Maker,
I'm not sure I'd call it a "trick," but how about a technique based on recent research into visitor behavior? I'll assume you've already got a strong theme and edited the text down under 200 words. The technique is "chunking" – breaking a complex story into bite-sized morsels.

Researchers presented visitors with an interpretive text and measured their reading and comprehension of the message. One group was presented one solid block of text. The next group read the same text broken into a few short paragraphs. The third group read the same text broken into tiny bulleted sections. The results improved each time the text was broken into smaller chunks. Of course, not every story can be told in a series of bullets, but you can often break out shorter paragraphs. Try it.

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,
I've tried everything I can think of to clean the plastic covers over our interpretive exhibits. They are full of streaks, haze and scratches. What can I do?

Hazy

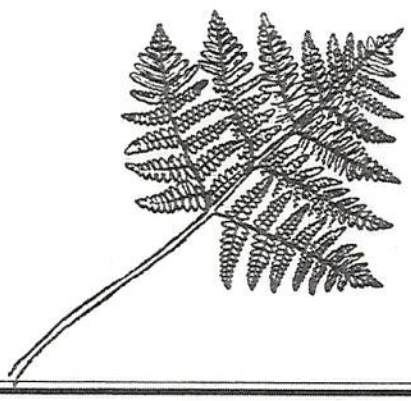
Dear Hazy,
A buffing wheel and polishing compound for plastic may help, but if they are as bad as it sounds, it may be time to replace the plastic covers. Look in the yellow pages for a good local plastic shop.

This problem is often caused by well meaning folks trying to clean the covers. Windex and other glass cleaners are made for glass, not plastic. Look for a special plastic cleaner and use it. Don't use those scratchy-brown paper towels either, get a clean soft cloth. If you are outdoors, hose them off first to remove most of the grit. Make sure everyone understands how to clean them before you put new ones in.

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,
You won't believe this one! I was out in front of the visitor center and overheard some folks talking. A young man noticed our garden volunteers hard at work. He said to his friend, "I wonder what that old lady did to get sentenced to community service work?"

Still Chuckling



The Times, They Are A-Changing

By Tim Merriman, Ph.D.
Executive Director, NAI

As Bob Dylan sang, it is true, the times, they are a-changing. John Naisbitt, author of *Megatrends,* writes in his new book, *Global Paradox,* that one-ninth of the world's economy is tourism and travel based. He contends that the trend toward this is growing. Resource interpretation and heritage tourism are important parts of this phenomenon. And the times are a-changing also in other parts of our world for government-employed interpreters. The Government Performance Review Act (GPRA) and fee demonstrations are changing the way we do business on federal properties.

"A MESSAGE FOR ME!"

Customer satisfaction surveys have been developed for most agencies and organizations. These surveys have been used for decades in the private sector by Disney and others.

The Government Performance Review Act or "gipra," as it has been dubbed, is mandating "outcomes-based" management. Stated simply, federal employees are faced with identifying measurable objectives that amount to "results." The days of vague but noble objectives, such as "enhance the public's understanding of the resource," will be replaced with more hard boiled objectives: reduce the number of road kills due to feeding of wildlife or decrease the amount of litter found in remote campsites and on trails. Both of these would reflect enhanced understanding of the resource. Both can be monitored and measured. You could prove that the volume of weight or litter was reduced on routine trail cleanups. Maintenance reports can document the number of road-killed animals per month and a reduction would be provable. These are the more resource management-oriented measures that might reflect the successes of interpretive programs.

Cold, hard measures applied to interpretation may make us flinch uncomfortably, but it may be good for our profession in the long run. Interpretation can deliver the goods in a measured world. Customer satisfaction surveys have been developed for most agencies and organizations. These surveys have been used for decades in the private sector by Disney and others. Well-designed and well-delivered interpretive programs will rank very high among visitor priorities. They want to know more about the resource and they enjoy the exchange with rangers or interpreters. The human touch becomes more important in a more impersonal world, dominated by voice mail and ATMs. Visitor studies is an important area of professional development for interpreters because it involves learning about our audiences. You cannot deliver well-designed programs without knowledge of the receiver of the service or

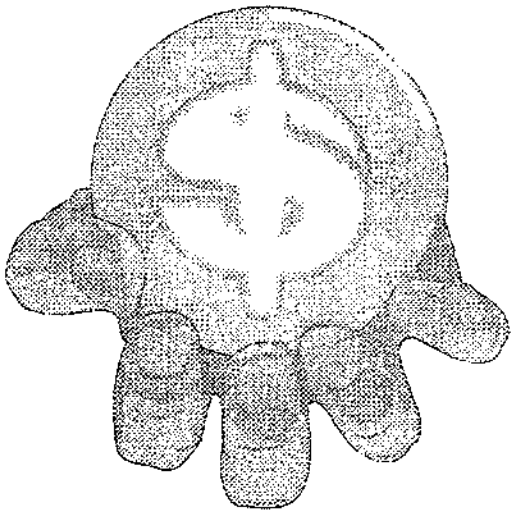
program. Visitor studies has been more common to the museum world until recently, but is being used by parks, zoos, nature centers and aquaria as well.

Fee-based interpretive programming is not new to the private sector. Nonprofit nature centers, zoos and museums have been developing programs for fees for a long time. Federal resource agencies have been locked out of these activities by policy in the past or through disincentives. The situation is changing. Many national parks and forests are now charging for specific kinds of interpretive programs under the "Fee Demo" program initiated a couple of years ago. The agency is allowed to keep a major percentage of funds earned within the park. That is a real incentive that did not exist in the past when all fees collected were returned to Congress.

Market demand is a key issue in development of fee programs. Demand is defined as "desire plus ability to pay." If you develop programs that people do not want, they are not going to bring more money to your park. If you price them beyond what people can afford, they will not attract an audience.

When programs that have been free are suddenly available at a price, it is an instant test of market demand features. Is the program worthy of the cost charged for it? The customer or visitor quickly will compare a $5 interpretive program to a movie or similar experience recreationally. Was it as entertaining, valuable or interesting as another activity that costs $5? Fees can drive improvement of quality and they certainly test our real connection with the audience. People are less likely to complain that a free program is not worth what was paid for it. They will tell you if your fee-based program is not as good as they expected for the price.

Fees give interpretation another measurable value in parks and heritage interpretation facilities. When organizations cut the budget, they are not going to eliminate those programs that raise their own funds through fees. Moving interpretive services into the fee arena will insure that they are not the first to go during down-sizing.



I managed a nature center for 13 years that lived on the revenue it generated. When we added fee-based school programs, we presumed our audience would decrease. The fees would drive away the customers. Our school programming grew tenfold in the decade that followed and the income from it helped support the staff to do the programs. The programs were assured their place in our service offerings because they were a valued income source along with being integrally related to our mission.

When we added fee-based school programs, we presumed our audience would decrease. The fees would drive away the customers. Our school programming grew tenfold in the decade that followed.

We may debate the dangers of fee-based programming and "outcomes-based" management. They seem cold and disjointed from our missions to preserve and protect resources or enhance the public's understanding of heritage. But, they are probably here to stay and we may find they make interpretive services the most valued part of an agency's or organization's service array. The times will continue to change and we have to keep changing with them.

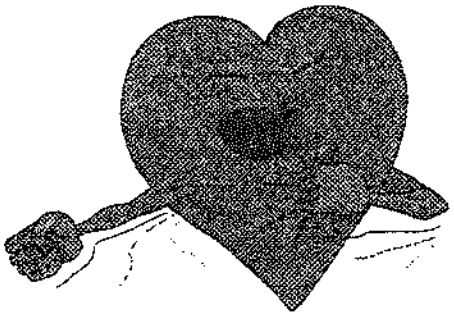
Heart-healthy Choices

By Dave Brooks
Spring Valley Nature Center, IL

All of us in the interpretive profession, whether frontline staff or administrators, have probably been faced with or (I hope) at least pondered the challenge of reaching out to new audiences. This may have been driven by memoranda from on high, asking us to increase program revenue and/or attendance, or we may have been asked to serve more culturally diverse audiences. Possibly, this desire to reach out was driven by a desire on our part to preach to more than just the choir.

Whatever the motivation, this challenge usually presents us with some tough questions. With staffing as the assumed constant in the equation, how much of our current programming needs to be cut so that new 'market-driven' programs can be offered? Just how much of what shows up on the marketing survey results do we actually act on? Will the wildlife ever be as watchable as they are on the Discovery Channel?

There are no simple answers to these questions. Some excellent advice to ponder when making these decisions was offered by Nancy Eckert-Harger of Minnesota's Hennepin County Parks at this year's NAI Region V Workshop. During a panel discussion on trends in nature center programming and funding, Nancy addressed the question of program cuts and revenue production.



She asked us to think of our core audience, those folks who have attended our programs for years and have been our long-time supporters, as our heart. If we decide to cut the programs which these people have consistently attended — even though possibly no one else did — in order to offer new programs for new audiences, then we may very well lose our heart.

There is another way of looking at this, for those who prefer a more business-minded approach. Like savvy business-people, we need to be attuned to changing markets, and be open-minded to new ways of getting people in the door. While doing that, however, we should continue to offer the products that our 'stakeholders' want. No successful business abandons the original product line that brought it success in the first place.

It is, of course, possible to develop new programs that are both product-driven and market-driven. If done effectively, these are the programs that can bring in both your core constituency AND new audiences. This is the key to *building* your core constituency, and is a true measure of success in any business!

When making a determination as to how much of your programming should be market-driven in order to follow market trends, and how much of it should be product-driven, remember to take care of your 'stakeholders', your heart. As Nancy reminded us, markets shift, and a new theme park, mega-mall or CD-ROM rage could appear any day to steal away your new-found audience.

If some of your programming continues to support your heart, however, they will continue to support you. In other words, there is value in preaching to the choir. They will always be there to sing your praise.

How much of our current programming needs to be cut so that new 'market-driven' programs can be offered? Just how much of what shows up on the marketing survey results do we actually act on? Will the wildlife ever be as watchable as they are on the Discovery Channel?

A Refresher Course

Docent Day at Crystal Cove

By Winter Bonnin
Crystal Cove State Park

When I began my career as an interpreter for the National Park Service, it was by default. I fell into this field while living on the island of St. John in the Virgin Islands, where I applied for a job as a seasonal interpreter. I had no formalized education in biology or natural resources or anything scientific. On the contrary, my degree was in communications and sociology. Well, an interpreter needs to be able to communicate, right? Once I began the job I felt like I had found my niche in life. I loved taking people hiking, snorkeling, and on seashore walks. However, because I had not studied natural history, I had to work extra hard to be able to interpret the island ecology, including the birds, marine life, and native plants. In short, I had to learn everything from scratch. Five years later, I am still an interpreter, but now work for State Parks at Crystal Cove. I am still learning about ecological processes and spend a lot of time reading and studying about the natural resources that comprise our park.

Since I do this for a living, I am able to hike regularly in the field to observe the changing plants and animals. I know what is blooming and what critters have been seen. I am able to attend workshops, and meet with resource managers who are doing monitoring projects in the park. Our docents, on the other hand, don't have this opportunity since they are volunteers only scheduled for one hike or walk per month. They all graduated from a 10 week docent training class, but for some, their instruction was many years ago and they could certainly use a refresher course. I felt that they would benefit, as would I, from a Docent Day, in which professionals doing research in the park would share their latest findings or simply refresh our memories about forgotten natural history tidbits.

Originally I planned to only invite our docents and those who work in the surrounding greenbelt, but as I was not receiving a huge response, I decided to open it to all docents or rangers working for state and county parks as well as nearby environmental educators. The number of confirmations soared and ultimately many more people were able to benefit from the esteemed group of presenters who had agreed to share their knowledge.

I invited ten presenters to each give two one-hour workshops, either in a classroom setting with slides or out in the field. The subjects ranged from mountain lions and spiders to fire ecology and the intertidal zone. Participants arrived at 8:00 AM to sign up for four workshops. Each class had a maximum of 20 people, and each presenter spoke twice. If, for example, a docent really wanted to hear the lecture on nocturnal animals at 9:00 AM, but also wanted to go on the geology walk scheduled at the same time, he or she could choose the one and still have the chance to participate in the other at a later hour. This jumbled schedule helped to avoid conflicts and allowed for docents to attend those workshops that most interested them.

Docent Day was a great success. As many of the presenters are professors and have spent a great deal of time doing research at Crystal Cove State Park, they provided the docents with the type of information that would be useful for interpretive talks. For example, we learned that the king snake, a resident who is occassionally spotted, has three totally different color patterns. We were also enlightened about a research technique which uses rigged cameras to photograph animals that commonly use our wildlife corridors. Probably the best message that came across however, was that it is vital for us all to continue working towards conservation and preservation of our limited open space.

Organizing an event like this was time consuming, yet the positive reports confirmed my belief that those of us who work or volunteer in this field need such stimulation. I came away anxious to share my new-found knowledge with park visitors, and look forward to facilitating another Docent Day. Next year, we'll present different topics . . . and after the word gets out, I suspect we'll have so many people signing up that some will have to be be turned away.

Women Outstanding in their Field

Introduction by Julie Champion, Metro Beach Nature Center, MI

The school groups had just left the nature center. A man in his early sixties came into the center. I said hello and asked if I could help him. He said "I would like to speak to a naturalist." I said that I was one of the naturalists. He said, "No, I want to speak to a naturalist." I politely restated that I was one of the naturalists and I could help him with a question. He started to look frustrated and said, "Well, I mean, can I speak to the head naturalist, your supervisor." I went to the back room to tell her that a patron had a question. (I was already catching on, but I couldn't be sure; maybe he had a special problem.) We both returned to the reception area and I introduced the supervising naturalist. An exasperated look crossed the man's face as he said, "NO, I mean I want to speak to a man!"

We politely said "Well, our one male naturalist is off today. He will be back in a few days. Can we take a message for him?" With much frustration the patron finally said, "Well, maybe you can answer a question." He asked a common question about bluebird boxes. We provided him with answers and gave him handouts and references. He seemed satisfied, but I suspect he referred to the written references to see if we really knew whit they were talking about!

This happened in the early 1980s in Metro-Detroit, Michigan. It wasn't the first time we had experienced this. I am sure many women in the field have similar stories to tell.

Responses of this type have become rare. Visitors accept female park personnel more readily. Imagine the women who came before us in the 1800s and early 1900s. What comments did they hear? How often were they discouraged from participating in their chosen vocation or avocation and their love for nature study?

Rainy Campbell provides a nice look at some of these women in her review of two books about women natural historians.

By Rainy Campbell, L.A. Stage Outdoor Education Center, MI

Traditionally, the great outdoors has been considered the province of men. Women pioneers may have cleared the wilderness standing shoulder to shoulder with men, but when the cabin was built, they turned to homemaking.

Yet some women did venture past the garden gate. These amateur naturalists contributed significantly to society's awareness and knowledge of natural history. Many considered their interests hobbies but there were others who went much farther afield. Some were self-educated or tutored by mentors. A number earned college degrees and full acceptance within the scientific community.

The following is a brief introduction to four of the hardier women outstanding in their field.

Martha Maxwell (1831-1881) collected and preserved the wildlife of Colorado as taxidermy specimens. She was one of the first to display these mounts in realistic settings.

She grew up in a rough cabin on the edge of the Oregon wilderness. Her education was spotty, but it gave her a foundation in zoology.

She was unique among women in that her collecting was not limited to small animals. Maxwell shot, skinned and stuffed hundreds of mammals and birds, including elk, mountain lion and bear. She discovered the Rocky Mountain screech owl and verified the existence of the blackfooted ferret, a species Audubon mentioned but never documented.

She supported herself by charging admission to view her collection and doing odd jobs. Very little of it has survived. What's left is displayed at the Smithsonian Museum under her original title, "Women's Work."

Mary Sophie Young (1872-1919) graduated from Wellesley College in 1895, earned her doctorate in botany and taught at the University of Texas. She made extensive plant collections of the Trans-Pecos region near Austin, Texas, and wrote complete descriptions published by the university.

In the field, she wore her "worst clothes at their worst" and carried a water bottle, lunch can, plant presses and a .25-caliber Colt automatic in her skirt pocket. She was an excellent shot, and supplemented field suppers of beans and biscuits with jackrabbit. She wrote, "one piece two inches in diameter and a half an inch thick will last the average man all day if he chews constantly and his jaws will stand the strain. Jackrabbit meat would make good sole leather."

Naturalists like **Annie Alexander** (1867-1950) were fascinated by all aspects of natural history. She had a degree in fine arts but was self-taught in paleontology, ornithology, mammalogy and botany. She traveled extensively in California, East Africa, Alaska (where she collected a new

subspecies of grizzly bear), Hawaii, Nevada, Arizona, Idaho, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado.

She established the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California in 1910 and spent the next forty years exploring the mountains and deserts of the west, collecting museum specimens.

Alexander was always most comfortable in the field, "a part of nature, footloose in the mountains." She celebrated her eightieth birthday on a 3-month field trip with friends. They collected 4,600 botanical specimens.

Ynes Mexia (1870-1938) did not consider herself a scientist, but a collector for the adventure of it. At 50 she became fascinated with botany. Her trips were financed by museums who wished to expand their collections.

Mexia spoke fluent Spanish and traveled to the remotest regions of Mexico by steamer, dugout canoe, and on foot. She collected thousands of specimens. In Alaska she climbed Mt. McKinley, collecting 6,100 plants. Her most adventurous trip, 3000 miles up the Amazon, resulted in 65,000 specimens from Brazil and Peru.

She discovered dozens of new species and at least one new genus of plants. She was one of the few women who delighted in having them named after her.

Known for her volatile personality, she had only a few friends. T. Harper Goodspeed of the University of California said she was "the true explorer type and happiest when independent and far from civilization."

This is only a sample of American women naturalists. Author Marcia Myers Bonta chronicles the lives and writings of some thirty women in her companion books *Women in the Field* (ISBN 0-89096-489-0) and *American Women Afield* (ISBN 0-89096-634-6), both published by Texas A&M University Press.

Interpretive Undercurrents

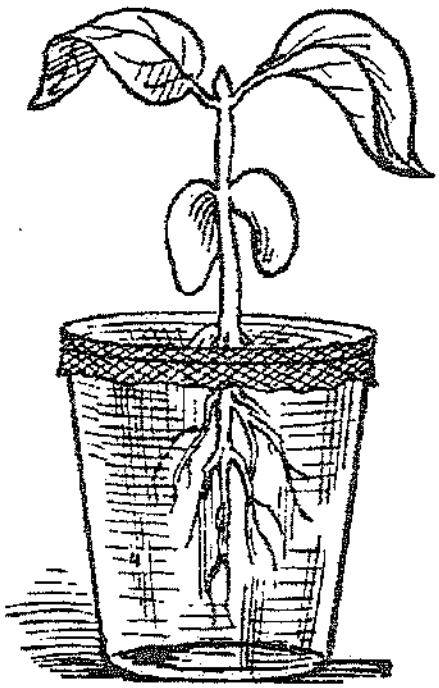
Planting Interpretive Seeds

By Carl Strang,
Willowbrook Wildlife Center

"There are no casual acts. Each thing we do is like a seed put into the fist of God. As that hand opens in the fullness of time, the seed sprouts and flourishes and becomes a tree that casts thousands of its own seed over all the future, changing things in little and big ways." **Nancy N. Baxter,** ***The Movers (novel).***

Interpreters are at one great disadvantage with respect to classroom teachers. We do not have the luxury of working with the same students for an extended period of time. Any teaching we do, any role modeling we perform, is just a touch. We will be anonymous in our visitors' memories, certainly as compared to those classroom teachers whose names will remain with them into adulthood. They will retain the story of their time with us, and it is up to us to make sure that story is a good one. But realistically, our influence is small in terms of the time they spend with us relative to their other activities. Most of the people we contact will spend more time in front of the TV on that day. We all realize this, and it's tempting to be depressed by it.

But a holistic view can help here. Our egos want us to be the most important influence any of our visitors will ever have in their entire lives. But we are individually only small parts of a huge Earth. Each



contact we make is part of a sequence of influences that will affect our constituent's relationship with the earth. Commonly that person will have encountered others before us, and certainly there will be others after us.

Every contact we make affects their relationship with the earth. We are planters of seeds. We need to make sure the seeds are good ones.

We are planters of seeds. We plant words, actions and artifacts in the experience of the people we contact, and the kinds of seeds we plant make a difference. We need to make sure the seeds are good ones.

But we also need to remember that they won't be the only ones. The best ones are those the person finds in the earth in a moment of discovery that mirrors back self-recognition. That process, which goes on whether we acknowledge it or not, frees us to give them the best seeds we can, the ones that best reflect our particular love for the earth. And sometimes, the impact of a seed is amazingly disproportionate.

The vast majority of the thousands of seeds released by a large cottonwood tree fail to grow to reproductive age. But consider the tiny, almost weightless cottonwood seed and the massive tree into which it will grow if successful. We have no way of knowing at the time which of our interpretive moments, exhibit details or unconscious bits of modeling will influence someone disproportionately. But some of them do.

Examples of seeds: A frown. A smile. A spider web glinting with jewels of dew. A freshly opened flower. A moment's glance that connects you with a person, lets him or her know you acknowledge their value. The image of you in a uniform, addressing the group in a friendly and confident manner. A robin, its beak stuffed with earthworms. A well-told

story. An ecological process shown to be beautiful by your interpretation of it. A coyote scat full of rabbit hair. The uniqueness of a leaf.

"Have a good life" was a poignant expression that became cliched by overuse a few years ago. It represents an interpreter's attitude in more ways than one, however. We want our visitors to be happy in the wake of their visit to us, and our well-wishing is part of our healthy attitude toward them, as we expect never to see them again. At the same time, we regard our work as important, and the lessons that come from our sites and missions do contribute to the making of good lives, if heeded and taken to heart.

The relationship between behavioral or role modeling and seed planting is plain to me. I believe that our **modeling** is made most effective when we fully respect the people for whom we are interpreting. Some tricks for respecting others:

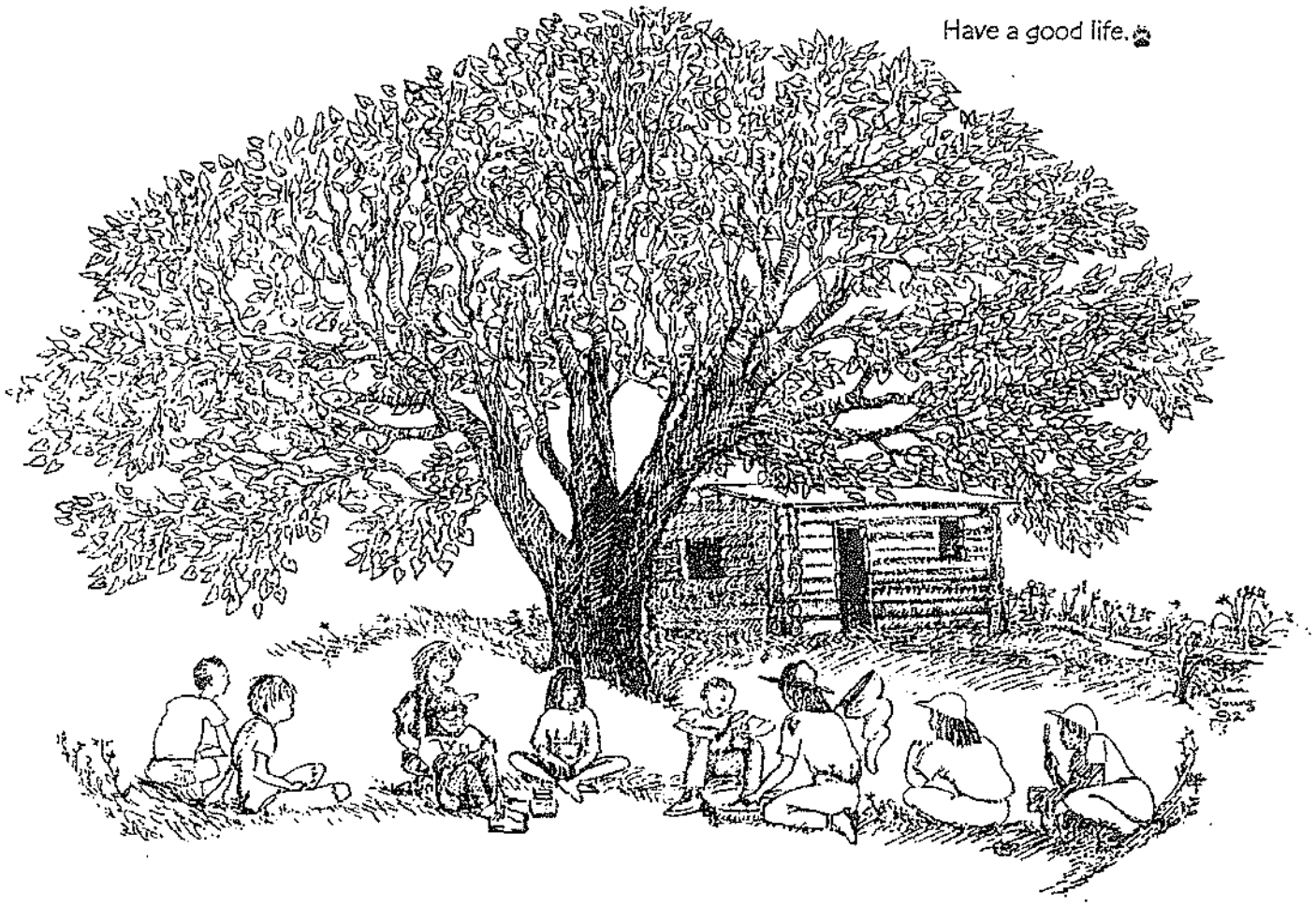
1. Remember that in each person you are impacting an entire life: within the adult you are addressing there is a child that lives on, observing and remembering and subconsciously commenting. The child before you will carry the memory of your time together into adulthood.

2. See the person purely, without judgement or label or category or assumption, and accept the accompanying impressions of beauty and love.

3. Study learning styles and related topics until the validity and value of each different manner of being is thoroughly impressed into your consciousness.

4. I'm not a big believer in reincarnation, but I've had fun with the thought that there is only one person — you — in the universe, going through every life that ever was, is, or will be, passing back and forth through time to do so (this thought also gives additional depth to the Golden Rule).

Have a good life.



On Being Listless

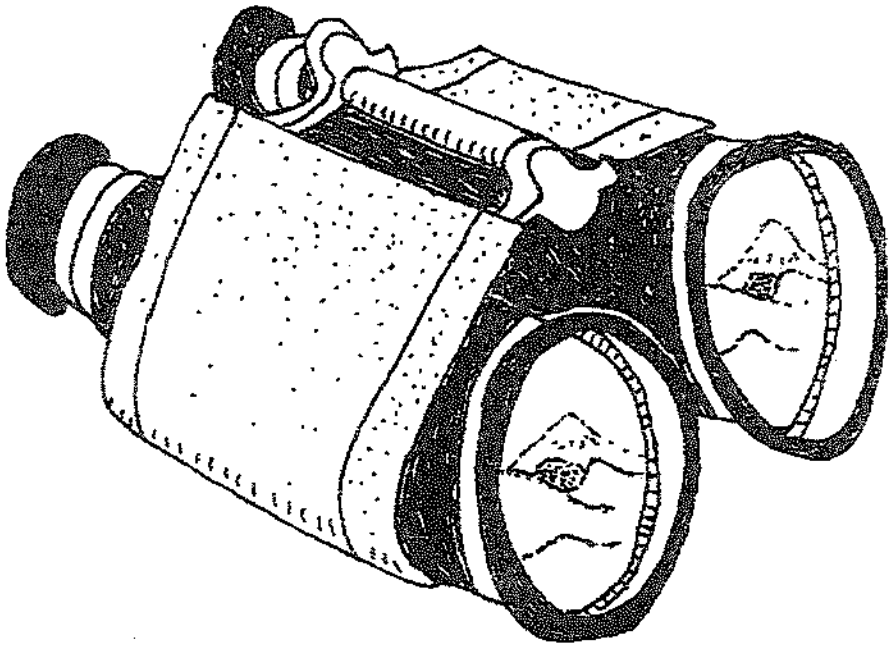
By Brian Barnette, Chief Naturalist, Dallas Museum of Natural History

Back on August 27, in the wee hours of the morning, my car was stolen.

Now, if you've ever seen my vehicle, your first reaction might be quite similar to mine: "What kind of sick, demented person would steal something that looked like that?" My ten-year-old Suburban, with 200,000 miles under its belts. was not exactly a thing of beauty. Its finish was equal parts paint and rust, the windshield had more cracks than a plumbers' convention, and it hadn't been washed in years. But it was paid for, and it ran, and it was mine. Was. Now there was just a big empty space on the street in front of my house.

Having never dealt with this situation before. I immediately set about trying to do all the right things. I called the police ("Stolen car? Don't, call us, we'll call you"). The insurance company ("Don't you remember? Our records show that you dropped that coverage"). The Museum ("I'm going to be a little late"). My brother and sister ("Hey, guess what happened. . ."). I also began trying to compile a list of the vehicle's contents—the stuff that was stolen with it. Camping gear. Tools. My snake sticks. A box of field guides.

It was while I was talking to co-worker Barb Peterman, whom I had called to bum a ride into work, that it hit me. My *life list!* My life list was in the box of stolen field guides!



A "life list" is the record of all the birds one has seen and identified. To a birder, it's the equivalent of a big game hunter's trophy room—all the species "bagged" over a lifetime of pursuit in the wild. It may represent hours, days, perhaps even years spent seeking a particular bird, as well as chance encounters and surprise sightings. For convenience, most birders use the checklists that are included in their field guides. Mine was in my well worn copy of Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds of Texas.*

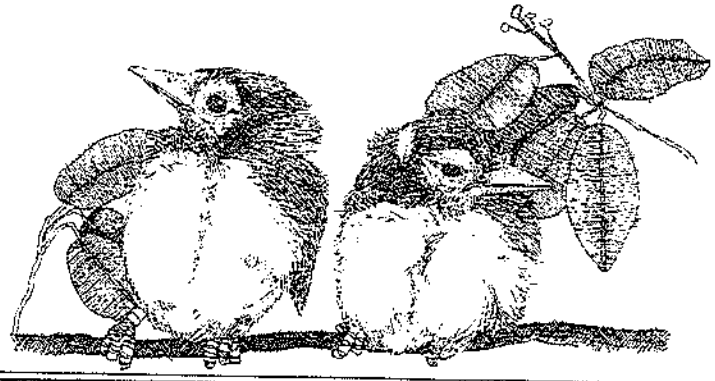
My list comprised a modest 300 or so species, observed over a period of about 30 years. In many cases, there was a notation of the date and locality of my first sighting of the bird. Of all the items in the car, it was the most irreplaceable. I could buy another tent. I could make some more snake sticks. But my life list! How could I ever remember all the details it encompassed?

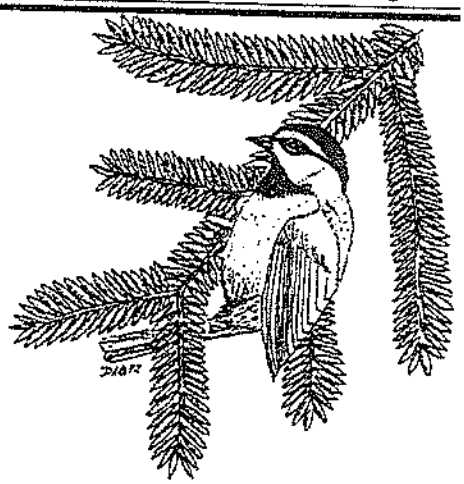
As I set about trying to reconstruct the list, I began to realize its true significance. For instance, they say you never forget your first one (birds ... we're talking birds). I remember clearly the first unfamiliar bird that I successfully observed and identified. I was eleven or twelve at the time, on a hunting trip with my dad in central Texas. I was sitting on a board nailed in a fork of a cedar elm, waiting for a deer to appear, when a small bird lit in the tree below me. I had no binoculars, so I trained the 2x telescopic sight on my rifle on the little ball of feathers. (If you're not familiar with optics, a 2x scope gives you approximately the same effect as looking through the cardboard tube from a roll of toilet paper.

The bird, in a gesture of cooperation quite atypical for its kind, overlooked my lapse in firearms etiquette and hopped around for several minutes so that I could get a good look at it. It was tiny, with a small, thin beak. It was mostly olive green with white bars on its wings and white rings around its eyes. And it had a bright red spot on the top of its head.

Later, back home, I found a copy of the Golden *Guide to the Birds of North America* in the Sanger Harris book department at Big Town Mall (this was a while back). Sure enough, there he was, in living color – the Ruby-crowned Kinglet. I had my first bird. I was hooked.

Now I was faced with a blank list . . . no entries at all. As I read off the names of the birds, other memories came flooding back. There was the female Redstart that I saw on a float trip down the Buffalo River in Arkansas . . . the Eurasian Sparrows that surprised us at the conference in St. Louis . . . and the Red Crossbills in the ponderosa pines at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. I remembered the White-fronted (now White-tipped) Doves in the citrus groves down at Harlingen . . . the American Woodcock in the deep woods of the Big Thicket . . . and the Red-headed Woodpecker in my grandmother's East Dallas backyard. I saw again the bright orange bill of the Black Oystercatcher that we passed as we drove off the ferry in Vancouver . . . the yellow of the Goldfinch on the feeder outside Bruce Boardman's window in Stephenville . . . and the ridiculous red, blue, and green of a Painted Bunting on a Possum Kingdom morning. And there were the ones that were extra special because I saw them on our family's San Saba ranch: Pyrrhuloxia, Green Kingfisher, and Black-shouldered Kite.





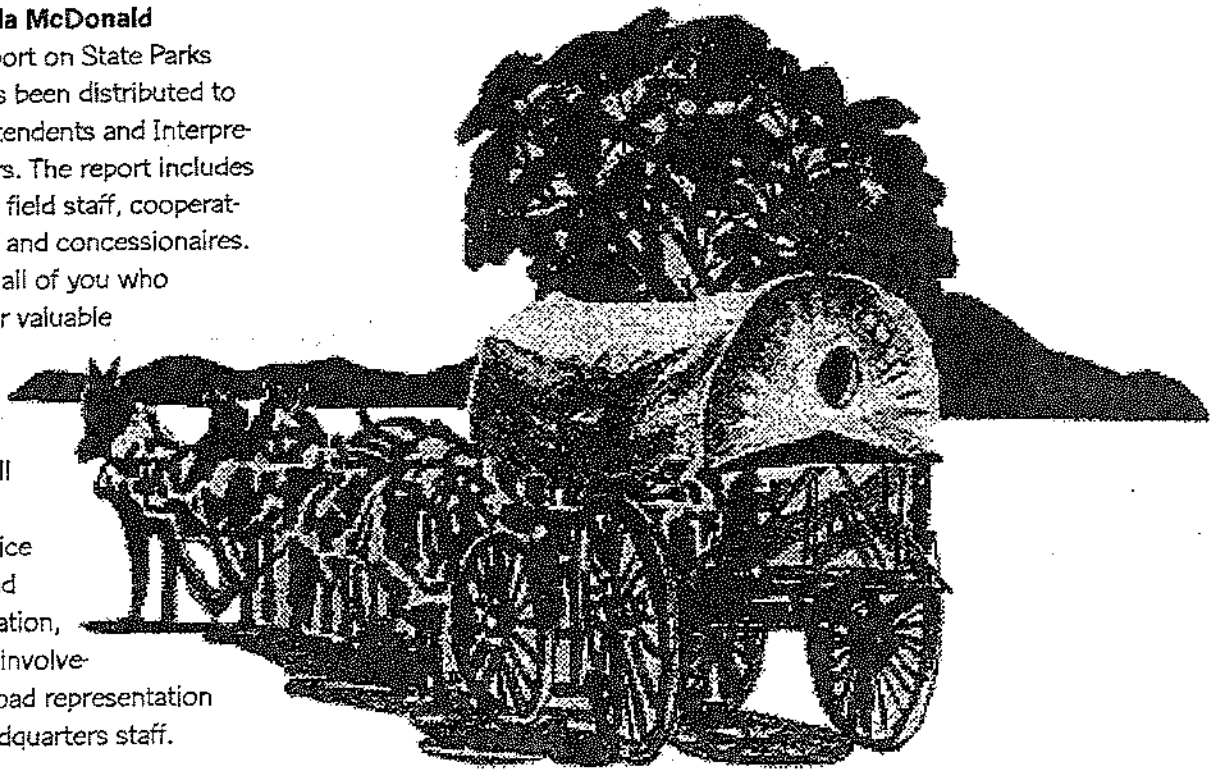
Gradually, it began to sink in . . . the real measure of a life list was not in the length of the list, but in the life it represented. Sure, it's a thrill to add a new bird to your total, and there's always a little good-natured one-ups-manship in comparing lists with other birders to see whose is longer. But that's not what's important. What matters are the memories—of field trips and campouts, of family and friends—the experiences that are somehow symbolized by the birds seen along the way. And while it was certainly disappointing to "lose" some of the species I had "bagged," there will be other opportunities. In the meantime, I've still got my memories ... my 'nocs ... and a brand new bird list to fill in. Only this time, I'm going to try to keep in mind that old adage, "Don't put all your egg layers in one basket." Or is it, "A bird list in the hand is worth two in the car?"

Oh, by the way, my Suburban turned up last week – minus my stuff, the battery, and the radio but otherwise intact and operable. It's gratifying to know that even car thieves have some standards.

State Parks Month 1998 Wrap-up

By Linda McDonald

The final report on State Parks Month 1998 has been distributed to District Superintendents and Interpretive Coordinators. The report includes comments from field staff, cooperating associations and concessionaires. Many thanks to all of you who contributed your valuable comments and suggestions. State Parks Month 1999 will be coordinated through the Office of Marketing and Revenue Generation, with continued involvement from a broad representation of field and headquarters staff.



Suggestions for 1999

- Year-round, monthly committee meetings
- Monthly 1-page bulletins to keep field staff, cooperating associations and concessionaires informed of the elements, slogan, themes and suggestions for implementation of State Parks Month 1999.
- Earlier release of promotional materials.
- Large-scale involvement with media and retail outlets.
- Free day-use coupons to promote State Parks Month, track resulting visitation and credit parks for lost revenue from free admission.
- More themes that involve all parks.

Recognition

The SPM committee prepared certificates of appreciation for three District Interpretive Coordinators for their enthusiasm, innovation and creativity in this year's promotion. They are:

- Pat Clark-Gray of Monterey District for her use of the graphics and talking points from State Parks Month in several local newspapers and tourist publications.
- Mary Stokes of the Four Rivers District for her creative use of "Fascinating Facts" from the field handbook to add interest to a co-op newsletter. She also submitted photographs of special events demonstrating the effectiveness of the "Discover California State Parks" banner.
- Tom Lindberg of Marin District for his innovative use of the "Strike it Rich" poster. Using his laser printer, he customized posters with a park-specific welcome message and an invitation to visit other parks within the district.

If you have any questions or would like a copy of the 1998 final report including all comments from the field evaluation, contact Linda McDonald at (916) 653-0768 or Calnet 453-0768.

Naming the Rose

By District Interpretive Specialist Mary Stokes

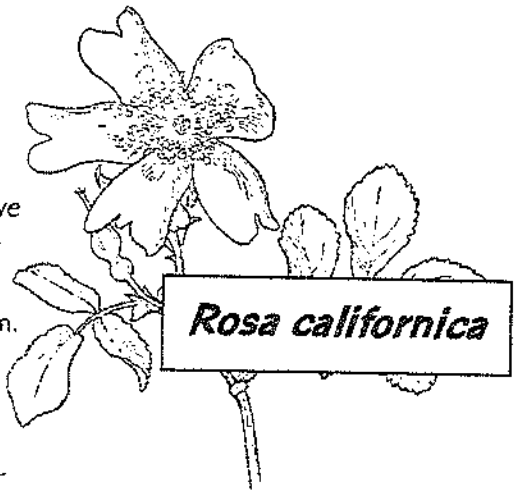
Interpreters are sometimes discouraged from using scientific names in park programs. "Nobody'll ever remember anything about a list of names, especially not Latin ones," a veteran Ranger cautioned us when we were trainees, "and they'll think you're showing off."

Malcolm Kushner, in *Successful Presentations for Dummies* (IDG Books Worldwide, 1996), explains why technical jargon puts people off — it's "exclusionary." "It's like knowing the secret password. If you speak the language, you're in (or included). If you don't speak the language, you're out (or excluded)."

The standard advice has been to just avoid technical terms, but Kushner points out that if you introduce the audience to your jargon (botany, geology, nineteenth century ranching, what the heck is a kiosk, anyway? . . .) —explaining it in understandable terms—you give them the secret password. They're included.

Aside from the precision and other sound reasons that experts give for using the correct term, scientific names can be fun! They often have great stories that go along with them. Ranger Bill Grummer never failed to get a chuckle with his translation of the scientific name for Blue-eyed grass. *Sisyrinchium bellum* = Beautiful pig-nose! His audiences all agreed the flower was beautiful, but he had to show them the pig's nose with a hand lens.

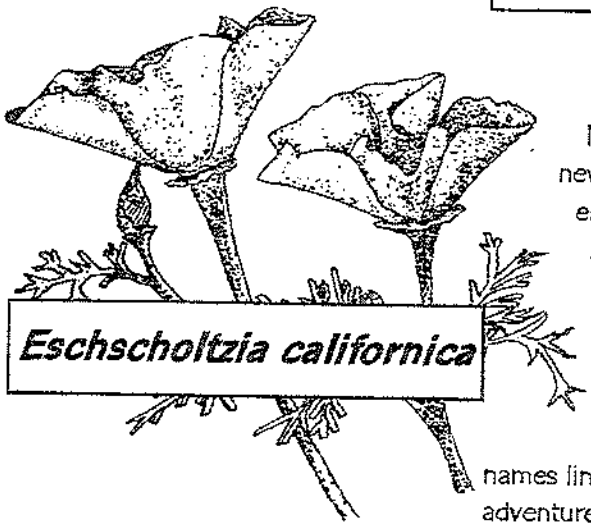
Sometimes inventing names for commonly seen species like *Animal convivalis* (party animal) or *Sus invia occidentalis* (western roadhog) helps to lighten up the use of scientific names.



Their stories help involve visitors who may not view themselves as "the science type." The book A *Wildflower by Any Other Name* (Yosemite Association, 1994), by Karen B. Nillson, makes some of these great stories readily accessible.

Scientific names transcend the language barrier for many non-English speaking visitors. They can also make easy connections for people with medical training or backyard gardeners, for example. So if you're a "Latin lover," don't hesitate to strut your stuff! Just remember to include everyone in your story. Kushner suggests that you just imagine yourself in a roomful of surgeons or computer programmers. You get the idea!

Scientific names can be fun! They often have great stories that go along with them.



Many scientific names for new world plants and animals encode the stories of grand nineteenth century explorations. Consider the lovely *Lewisia* and *Clarkias*, for example. Fremont Eschscholtz, Douglas, Audubon and many other names link human history and adventure to the natural world.

Green and Gold Conference

By Patricia Clark-Gray, DIS - Monterey District

State Park staff Mary Stokes (District Interpretive Specialist - Four Rivers), Herb Dallas (Archeologist - Southern Service Center), Dave Vincent (District Superintendent - Santa Cruz), and I attended the Green and Gold conference at the University of California, Santa Cruz from July 30th to August 2nd . The purpose of the conference was two-fold. The Green and Gold conference recaptures California's past environments, explores their transformation, and imagines their future. Through an examination of the "green culture" of the pre-Gold Rush era and the formation of the Golden State and its "culture of gold, it investigates the unique blend of nature and culture that defines California's past and its future prospects. Exploring the implications of the 150th anniversary of the1848 discovery of gold in California and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the conference culminates by looking at the co-mingling of the green and gold cultures as the millennium approaches."

I found the topics and the speakers fascinating. I especially enjoyed Kat Anderson speaking on Native California cultivators and Dennis Martinez speaking about Native California ecology and fire. Several field trips were offered and I visited Fall Creek and learned about the Santa Cruz lime kilns and lumbering history.

Herb Dallas and several other park folks attended the Green & Gold Conference, "looking at the co-mingling of the green and gold cultures as the millennium approaches."

At the focus group session, I learned about the work of the San Francisco Estuary Institute. They are developing maps as part of an ongoing effort involving scientists, historians, resource managers, and citizens to understand environmental change in the San Francisco Bay Area. The map of the historical landscape that Robin Grossinger, technical director, showed the group was based upon over 1,000 independent historical documents, including Spanish land-grant case materials, early federal and local cartography, aerial and oblique photography, landscape paintings, explorer's accounts, engineering documents, and oral histories. I think these types of maps will be great additions to our interpretive exhibits. Robin is developing a "how to" guide and will be sending me a copy. If anyone is interested in receiving one, please contact me.

Another great resource from the conference is a new book edited by Carolyn Merchant, conference coordinator, titled *Green Versus Gold: Sources in California's Environmental History* (1998). Mary Stokes and I are taking the two-unit course associated with the conference and we are reading this book plus two other environmental history books. I think every district should have a copy of this book in their interpretive library.

As we participate in Sesquicentennial events we need to recognize the environmental impacts of the Gold Rush and the subsequent impacts of the increased population on California. As Raymand Dasmann in his session on the *The Way Things Were* summarized the changes to California: people dried up lakes and filled in marshes (90% of riparian wetland eliminated), eliminated native grasses, reduced oak woodlands, cut old growth conifers, reduced the tule elk population, reduced the sea otter population, exterminated the grizzly, and dammed rivers.

I know that we can't go back to "the way things were," but as resource managers we can maintain the biological diversity in our park lands, increase our revegetation efforts, continue our controlled burning, acquire more park lands, and most importantly, educate our visitors about the impacts of the Gold Rush on our natural landscape and the continuing losses of California's natural landscapes and wildlife.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS
150 EXCHANGE.

"I Wish I'd Never Heard of California!"

☞ A TRAVELLING SESQUICENTENNIAL LECTURE TOUR focusing on so-called GOLD RUSH "WIDOWS" will begin this Spring, thanks to a $10,000 grant from the CALIFORNIA COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES. The series, "I Wish I'd Never Heard of California," is sponsored by the California Department of Parks and Recreation and co-sponsored by cooperating associations, historical organizations, and libraries and archives throughout the state.

☞ What makes this program unique is its focus on the effects of the Gold Rush on the WIVES AND CHILDREN who endured the strains of long separation IN THE EAST. The programs will tackle a topic rarely touched and will offer thoughtful insights based upon well-researched primary source documentation.

☞ SCHOLAR-PRESENTERS LINDA PEAVY AND URSULA SMITH have been writing women's history and biography for over twenty years. Their Sesquicentennial program is sure to raise as many questions as answers about community dynamics and the role of women 150 years ago, as well as today.

☞ BEGINNING IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE STATE on April 24th in Borrego Springs, THE PROGRAMS WILL MOVE NORTH to San Luis Obispo, Monterey, Pacheco Pass, Turlock, Columbia, Sacramento, Coloma, Grass Valley, Oroville, Chico, and Shasta. The program will be offered to the public free of charge.

1999 SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMISSION THEME: *DIVERSITY.*

CALIFORNIA'S DIVERSITY IS THE GOLD DISCOVERY TO STATEHOOD SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMISSION'S THEME for 1999. With the Gold Rush began the greatest movement of people in modern history. 150 years ago people came to California from every corner of the earth. They transformed the land, changed attitudes toward wealth and work, and dramatically accelerated the political processes that led to California's Statehood.

THE SESQUICENTENNIAL is one of those special anniversary dates that come along once in a lifetime. It offers a "GOLDEN MOMENT" to re-examine the whole range of impacts represented by this era--social, economic, political and environmental. This is "real world history" in our own "backyard."

In light of new research and "other" perspectives (Native American, Mexican, Chinese, French), use the opportunity presented by the Sesquicentennial to PROMOTE a better understanding of CALIFORNIA'S ETHNICALLY AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE POPULATIONS.

Continued ☞

SESQUICENTENNIAL POSTERS AVAILABLE!!!

HANDSOME COMMEMORATIVE GOLD RUSH SESQUICENTENNIAL POSTERS have been designed and printed by *THE SACRAMENTO BEE*. The four-poster set is modestly priced at $5.00! Each makes an EXCELLENT EDUCATIONAL DISPLAY WORTHY OF WALLS on visitor centers and schools. The four poster subjects include:

The Evolution of Gold Mining.

On Your Mark, Get Set, Gold! (routes taken to California)

Sutter's Fort: Crucible of the Gold Rush.

Coloma: Where It All Started.

Contact James Barrera, Education Services Coordinator, *The Sacramento Bee*, P.O. Box 15779, Sacramento, CA 95852 (Phone: 916/321-1599 or 1/800/284-3233 ext. 1785; FAX: 916/321-1783; e-mail: jbarrera@sacbee.com).

CALIFORNIA CHRONICLES.

COBBLESTONE PUBLISHING COMPANY'S MOST RECENT editions of CALIFORNIA CHRONICLES released in November 1998 and January 1999, highlight NATIVE AMERICANS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA and RAILROADS, respectively.

Each magazine is theme-oriented and has colorful photographs, drawings, and activities exploring California (for kids, grades 4 and up). Each draws attention to those California State Parks that relate to the themes. Future issues in the works will examine WORLD WAR II, ARTISTS' INTERPRETATIONS OF CALIFORNIA, AND MISSIONS. Subscriptions are $23.95 a year (5 issues). If you would like to find out more, telephone (603) 924-7209.

GOLDEN MOMENTS.

A SERIES OF 30-SECOND SESQUICENTENNIAL TELEVISION SPOTS encouraging the public *"to explore the places where the past lives on 150 years later"* are now being produced in a special partnership between CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS and USDA FOREST SERVICE. Colorful reenactments filmed on location feature vignettes of California history *and* our department's web site, **www.cal-parks.ca.gov**. Thus far, five "GOLDEN MOMENTS" have been developed and these will be shown throughout the state, as both PAID and PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS on network and cable stations. More are planned.

☞ DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT THE SESQUICENTENNIAL AND THE ACTIVITIES PLANNED AROUND THE STATE?

Contact Mary Helmich, the Department's Sesquicentennial Coordinator (916/653-3913; FAX: 916/654-9048; e-mail: mhelm@parks.ca.gov).

California's Tapestry

A Section of *The Catalyst* | Office of Community Involvement | Issue #10 - Winter '99

Meeting the Needs of California's Youth

By Carol Nelson and Jack Shu

Recent newspaper articles have reported that the violent crime rates for youth have remained high while overall crime rates have come down. An article printed in the *San Diego Union Tribune* on December 28, 1998 pointed out a widely accepted view by criminologists: "that all of the huge increase in homicide in the late 1980s and early 1990s was attributable to a rise in killing by juveniles and young people 24 and under."

Thus, working with youth may have the most significant effect on crime in our communities. In this regard, California State Parks and the outdoor recreation opportunities they provide can be effective tools in developing responsible youth, resulting in a reduction in crime. By serving the emerging needs of California's youth, California State Parks fills an important societal niche.

Research conducted by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1992) found that youth of all races, ethnicities, backgrounds and social-economic levels experience risk factors in their lives. The primary risk to all youth is having unstructured, unsupervised time after school, weekends and during the summer.

Recreation programs for youth are addressed in the Department's Performance Based Budget measures. Districts are now counting participant hours for programs which provide specific services to youth and families. Guidelines for reporting these annual totals are being tested this year. Tracking a qualitative outcome has been more difficult. To accomplish this, a model involving "positive protective factors" was used. This approach is based on the current theory of building resiliency, as explained below.

Many young people experience risks. However, not all of those exposed to risk succumb to its influences. The resilience theory asserts that experiences and influences that provide a protective influence can mitigate these risks. A resilient youth is more resistant to the risks that might otherwise result in anti-social behavior. Witt (1997) described the influence of protective factors with an analogy:

In winter, many people live under conditions that lead some of them to get the flu. These individuals may become debilitated from being out in the cold, or from stressful conditions in their lives; many fail to get enough exercise because of being confined indoors; and perhaps many fail to eat a nutritious diet. All of these factors stress the immune system. The risk of catching the flu also is increased by the number of people with whom there is contact. However, getting a flu vaccination may result in avoidance of the illness or in a less debilitating case of it. Lifestyle, habits and the surrounding environment put people at risk, but the flu vaccination provides a degree of protection that results in avoidance or reduction in the incidence of risk. Those who have this protection and are not infected by the flu under conditions of exposure to risk are said to be resilient.

Based on this approach, an evaluation form was tested last summer on various programs the Department conducted for youth. The evaluation attempted to measure how well the programs or activities provided recognized protective factors for the participants. A revised evaluation form will be widely distributed in 1999.

As rangers, lifeguards or interpreters, we often recognize the power that our programs have on youth. We can direct this strength toward the positive development of youth, tailoring programs to increase their impact on communities. We will also have a means to measure the effectiveness of these programs so that the Department is credited with this valuable contribution to society.

Submit articles and comments to: Jack K. Shu, Park Superintendent, OCI- Southern California, c/o Southern Service Center, 8885 Rio San Diego Drive, San Diego 92108, Ph# (619) 220-5330

Catalyst Winter 1999 Contents

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